

VZCZCXR06649  
RR RUEHBZ  
DE RUEHBZ #0439/01 3061519  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 021519Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0813  
INFO RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0900

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRAZZAVILLE 000439

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DEPT FOR AF/C SWAN, DESK OFFICER BARGERON, AF/EX PMO MARTINEZ; AF/C PLEASE PASS TO OFDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [PGOV](#) [FAID](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [CF](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZZAVILLE IN BRIEF, 2 NOVEMBER 2007

**¶1.** (U) The Renaissance Man: President Denis Sassou-Nguesso proclaimed in his state of the nation address that the Republic of Congo (RoC) is now in a full renaissance mode. Addressing Parliament on October 27, the President stated "The renaissance of the Congo is a visible, concrete and tangible ambition- that our people see and touch on a daily basis." Presenting a long list of projects that have been completed this past year, the President failed to acknowledge that the completed projects were not financed by his government, but rather by other nations. There was no mention of what the other nations received in exchange for the projects, no references to outstanding debts or recent meetings with the World Bank. He listed future projects that have very recently been signed with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and said that during this coming year his administration will secure a social security/retirement fund, pay the unpaid salaries of state officials, recruit 4,000 health and teaching staff, renovate 500 classrooms and the Brazzaville main hospital (CHU), complete the national census, and provide free anti-retroviral medications to HIV-positive Congolese. He noted that RoC has renewed positive bilateral relations with France, Namibia, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and United Arab Emirates. Omitted was mention of the United States (again), the United Nations (again) or the European Union (except for a bleat about blocking Congolese sugar exports). In spite of these promises, the only announcement that received applause was that National Day would be held in the city of Brazzaville for the next two years (Comment. This is a change from the practice of choosing a city each year. Brazzaville had already been the 2008 designee-requiring two years for the modernization is one indication of the sorry state of infrastructure in the capital. End comment.) The President is currently on his annual pilgrimage to his birthplace in Oyo to commemorate the death of his mother. As is always the case this time of year, there are predictions of changes in government, including a Cabinet reshuffle, in the offing.

**¶2.** (U) The Thirteenth Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEAAC) opened October 30 and was attended by Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, Joseph Kabila Kabange of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Fradique de Menezes of Sao Tomi et Principe, and Francois Bozizi of Central Africa Republic. Cameroon, Angola, Burundi and Equatorial Guinea were represented by their prime ministers. In his opening address, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso said the CEAAC members must focus on security and economic stability and must drop barriers that prohibit trading and free movement. The formal agenda included: the status of negotiations between the countries of Central Africa and the European Union (EU); signing an economic partnership agreement; drafting a master plan of transportation in the region; and developing and enforcing a Free Trade Area. Joseph Kabila Kabangui of DRC was appointed the new chairman while ROC Louis Silvain-Ngoma remains the secretary general.

**¶3.** (U) The RoC Constitutional Court released its decision regarding the 19 cases claiming mismanagement of the June and August legislative elections: four cases were considered to have merit and elections will be rescheduled in those districts. The

other 15 cases were dismissed for lack of evidence. Cases dismissed included the complaint filed by Alain Akouala-Atipault against Guy Gantsio Gambou (Plateaux); Jean Adidi against Andri Kissangui (Sangha) and Niciphore Fylla Saint Eudes against the electoral Administration of Poto Poto, the President's district. Opposition rumors are now saying that Alain Akouala-Atipault, currently the Minister of Communication, will now lose his Cabinet seat to Claudia Lemboumba, President Sassou's daughter who currently serves as President's Adviser on Public Relations.

¶4. (U) Emile Ouosso, Minister of Transports, announced a plan to replace the grounded Antonovs. The GRoC will rent aircraft, two Boeing and two Embrauer, from South Africa, until purchase can be finalized.

¶5. (U) Three People's Republic of China (PRC) companies were selected to construct 1,000 new homes in the Brazzaville area. Jean Jacques Bouya, Ministry of Public Works, announced that the Beijing Construction Engineering Group, the International Economic and Technical Cooperative of Weil Hai, and China Jiangsu Cooperation will build the low-income homes in conjunction with an urban master plan first started in 1982.

¶6. (U) Gregory Moua Likibi, Ministry of Tourism, presided over a workshop to implement multilateral environmental agreements with local NGOs and environment groups to identify common needs and goals and improve the management of the environment.

¶7. (U) Heavy rains in Brazzaville: A heads up for the Department and OFDA. The monsoon season has hit Brazzaville with full force and Embassy has begun inspecting various neighborhoods that are perennial victims of high waters. We anticipate the likelihood of requesting OFDA funds for emergency relief. Last year, we were the sole diplomatic mission to respond, and joined with our NGO partner, IPHD and Texaco to get direct relief to 560

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families made destitute.  
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